

## **History at Brambletye**

It used to be said that ‘Geography is about maps, History is about chaps’. Just as Geography has a much wider scope than was once the case, so History is more than just a list of dates and events to be learned for tests and exams. It is still important to gain knowledge of British history and topics in different age groups ranging from the Stone Age to Anglo-Saxons to the Middle Ages and right through to the Industrial Revolution. However this ‘knowledge and understanding of events, people and changes in the past is only one of the aims of teaching History at Brambletye. The others are:

- chronological understanding: i.e. what happened when and in what order, and how one set of events is linked to other events before and after
- historical interpretation: i.e. recognising that the past is reported and can be interpreted in different ways
- intelligent historical enquiry: developing research skills through independent and group study, and use of the Internet and library resources, leading to accurate and appropriate asking and answering of questions concerned with historical events
- organisation and communication: i.e. use of correct terminology and application of historical knowledge in the correct context, as well as making comparisons between events in different historical periods
- to nurture inherent enjoyment, curiosity and intelligent enquiry regarding our study of the past
- to develop open-mindedness, critical thinking and the ability to process and interpret data in order to make moral judgments on the ‘wider issues’ of history, such as those of race and gender

These last two aims are what we would call ‘life skills’ as opposed to ‘subject skills’

In Year 3 pupils are taught about the period from the Stone Age to the Romans in Britain, as well as topics on the Egyptians and the Greeks. This work is supplemented in Classical Civilisation lessons. Anglo-Saxons and Vikings follow in Year 4.

Subsequent year groups are taught about the Middle Ages and the Making of the United Kingdom. The ‘cut off’ point is usually the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and the development of the Industrial Revolution. Pupils sitting Common Entrance in Year 8 are required in the exam to select two

questions from one or more historical periods. These questions test historical knowledge but also the key skills of empathy, analysis, interpretation and – in the essay question – the fluent presentation of an argument supported by evidence. The broad content of scholarship papers varies enormously, but in general terms schools take a good factual knowledge as read and are really looking for pupils who can analyse and interpret ideas perceptively as well as clearly presenting an argument in good English!

Pupils have two periods of History per week, increasing to three in the upper part of the school. A range of historical outings takes place during the academic year. These have included Battle Abbey (Year 5), Hever Castle (Year 6) and, in Year 7, an outing to Portsmouth Historic Dockyard to view HMS Victory and HMS Warrior. A Year 8 group visits the Imperial War Museum. Some pupils also sit the Townsend-Warner History Paper every year. Pupils in Year 8 who have completed their scholarship exams have recently completed projects on ‘Children At War: 1940-45’ and Roman Britain.

History is a huge subject and parents are more than welcome to ‘do their bit’ by taking the family to historical sites in the holidays! Why not join English Heritage or the National Trust as a family? Equally now that you know what is covered in each year, why not visit some Internet websites that focus on those topics? It all helps to foster an interest in a fascinating subject!